

4.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

4.1 Public Involvement

Reclamation's approach to preparing the RMP and associated Draft EA has been to involve the public, particularly by developing a dialogue with local stakeholder groups. The goal of the public involvement process was to make sure that all stakeholders, including the general public, have ample opportunity to express their interests, concerns, and viewpoints, and to comment on the plan as it was developed. By fostering two-way communication, Reclamation was also able to use the talents and perspectives of local user groups and agencies during the alternatives development process.

Reclamation's public involvement process has involved the following five key components:

- **Newsbriefs**—A newsletter was initially mailed to nearly 200 user groups, nearby residents, and agencies. The mailing list is continuously expanded as more interested parties are identified. Five newsbriefs have been released, with one more scheduled upon completion of the Final EA and RMP.
- **Public Meetings/Workshops**—Three public meetings are included in the RMP/EA planning process. One was held early on in the process to solicit public input (scoping) related to issues and opportunities. The second meeting was held March 2003 to further refine the alternatives. The final public meeting was held in April 2004 to take public comments on the Draft EA. Public meetings were held in Burley, Idaho.
- **Ad Hoc Work Group**—This group consists of 21 representatives from interested groups and agencies. They met seven times throughout the RMP development process to identify issues and assist with RMP update and alternatives development.
- **RMP Study Web Site**—The newsbriefs, draft materials, and meeting announcements are continuously updated at a dedicated website on Reclamation's Pacific Northwest site: <http://www.pn.usbr.gov>.
- **News Releases**—Periodically, Reclamation prepares news releases for distribution to local news media. Such news releases generally result in press coverage of the RMP process.

In February 2002, the first newsbrief introduced the RMP process, announced the first public meeting, and provided a mail-in form for submitting issues and initial comments on the management of parcels in the Minidoka North Side RMP Study Area. Approximately 20 of these response forms were returned. The results of the mail-in response form and the issues raised at the first public meeting were summarized in the second newsbrief, mailed July 2002. The issues were listed in a table. The third newsbrief was mailed in December 2002 and provided an update of the AHWG process and the Problem Statement compiled from the public outreach to date. The fourth newsbrief was mailed in February 2003 and provided a summary of the RMP Draft Goals and Objectives, the draft alternatives, and announced the second public meeting and workshop. The fifth newsbrief, mailed at the beginning of April 2004, announced the availability of this Draft EA and provided a

date for the third (and final) public meeting. The sixth newsbrief will be mailed out to announce the release of the Final EA and completion of the RMP, expected in January 2005.

The first public meeting was held on March 6, 2002, in Burley. The purpose of this meeting was to conduct public scoping of the issues in the Minidoka North Side Study Area. Approximately 25 people attended the meeting. Reclamation provided information about the RMP planning process, then the participants broke into small work groups to discuss important issues and opportunities the RMP should address. The second public meeting was held one year later, on March 20, 2003. In the interim, the Reclamation Planning Team had conducted additional research and surveys on the parcels, and had drafted initial alternatives. The purpose of this meeting was to find out what alternative management concepts the public supports and why. This information was used to help refine the alternatives presented in this Draft EA. The third and final public meeting/workshop was held in Burley on April 22, 2004. Its primary purpose was to solicit comments on the Draft EA. This meeting followed a similar format as the previous two meetings, beginning with presentation of the alternatives. Attendees could then ask questions of the RMP team members at stations that emphasized particular portions of the plan.

The AHWG met in April, June, and August, 2002, and February and May, 2003. As part of the June 2002 meeting, the group spent a day touring the parcels in the Minidoka North Side RMP Study Area and becoming more familiar with the issues. The 21 members were of considerable assistance in the alternatives development process. A wide variety of viewpoints was included in the group. The Preferred Alternative was arrived at through AHWG discussions, and the recommendations of agency specialists and planners. The entities represented in the AHWG are listed in Table 4.1-1.

TABLE 4.1-1
AHWG Represented Interests

A&B Irrigation District	Minidoka County Historical Society
Adjacent Property Owners (2)	Minidoka County Sheriff's Office
Bureau of Land Management	Minidoka County Weed Control
Cassia County Commission	Minidoka Irrigation District
Cassia County Sheriff's Office	Natural Resource Conservation Service
City of Rupert City Council	Pheasants Forever
Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Region 4	Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Idaho State Parks and Recreation	Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
Jerome County Commission	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minidoka Wildlife Refuge
Local Business Interest	
Minidoka County Commission	

4.2 Agency Consultation and Coordination

Reclamation consulted with several Federal and local agencies throughout the RMP process to gather valuable input and to meet regulatory requirements. This coordination was integrated with the public involvement process.

4.2.1 Endangered Species Act

The evaluation of endangered species contained in this Draft EA serves as Reclamation's biological assessment as required under the ESA. It evaluates impacts on listed and candidate species, including the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, bald eagle, yellow-billed cuckoo, and three snail species. Reclamation has determined that the Preferred Alternative will have no effect on these species and is therefore not required to formally consult with FWS. As a result, Reclamation does not need concurrence from FWS.

4.2.2 National Historic Preservation Act

Reclamation has collected existing cultural resource information from the Minidoka North Side RMP Study Area to prepare the Draft EA, and to facilitate subsequent compliance with the NHPA. Coordination with the Idaho SHPO has occurred in conjunction with public review of the Draft EA. It is understood that specific, future undertakings in response to specific RMP prescriptions will require individual consultations with the SHPO and the Tribes pursuant to the 36 CFR 800 regulations.

4.3 Tribal Consultation and Coordination

4.3.1 Government-to-Government Consultation with Tribes

Reclamation has provided information regarding the RMP process through meetings and letters to the Fort Hall Business Council of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Tribal Council of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, the Tribal Council of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, the Natural Resources Committee of the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Tribal Council of the Burns Paiute Tribe. Tribal representatives that will receive the Draft EA are listed in Chapter 7, Distribution List.

4.3.2 Indian Sacred Sites (Executive Order 13007)

Reclamation has informed the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes about the RMP through written notifications and meetings. As part of their review of the Draft EA, Tribes have had an opportunity to provide specific comments about Indian sacred sites that might be located in the RMP Study Area.

4.3.3 Indian Trust Assets (ITAs)

As discussed above at Section 4.3.1, Government-to-Government Consultation with Tribes, Reclamation has met with Tribes that may have ITAs in the RMP area. Discussions of these rights are addressed in Chapter 3, Section 3.16, Indian Trust Assets.

4.3.4 Other Laws and Regulations

The relationship between Federal agencies and sovereign Tribes is defined by several laws and regulations addressing the requirement of Federal agencies to notify or consult with Native American groups or otherwise consider their interests when planning and implementing Federal undertakings. Among these are the following:

- NEPA
- Executive Order 12875, Enhancing the Intergovernmental Partnership
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Presidential Memorandum: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, April 29, 1994
- Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments

Reclamation has adhered to these laws and regulations as applicable to the development of the RMP.